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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, DRL

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SUDANESE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT,S TRIP TO ERITREA

Classified By: Charge Cameron Hume, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On February 23 Sudanese First Vice President Salva Kiir traveled to Eritrea with a delegation that included Director of the National Intelligence and Security Services Salah Gosh, MFA Under Secretary Mutriff Saddiq, and SPLM-bloc parliamentary leader Yassir Arman. Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki insisted that he meet one-on-one with Kiir and refused any participation by other delegation members.

¶2. (C) According to Saddiq and Arman, this trip was part of a concerted effort to improve Sudan,s relations with Eritrea. Because of the SPLM,s long-term relationship with Eritrea, Kiir agreed to undertake the mission on behalf of the Government of National Unity. Kiir,s talking points were that Sudan was ready to raise its representation in Eritrea to the ambassadorial level immediately; Sudan wanted good relations with both Eritrea and Ethiopia, and it would not allow its relations with one to disadvantage the other. Sudan agreed that Eritrea (rather than Libya) could take the lead on mediating between the Government of National Unity and the Eastern Front. Kiir added that Sudan was committed to a negotiated solution to the Darfur crisis and wanted Eritrea to use its influence with the Darfur rebels to that end.

¶3. (C) Comment: The Sudanese are now waiting for a response on these points. This was Kiir's second trip to Asmara since December 2005, and is important for several reasons: it shows the partners in the Government of National Unity working together for the first time on national and security policy; it parallels other moves the government is making to secure a negotiated solution for Darfur; and, it shows new flexibility on the path to a solution with the Eastern Front. End comment.

¶4. (U) Tripoli minimized considered.  
HUME